

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9999

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USUN NY 419

USCINCEUR

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 5867

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, MO, SP, AG, MR

SUBJECT: SPANISH STEP UP ACTIVITY WITH RESPECT TO SPANISH SAHARA

REF MADRID 5663

1. SUMMARY. IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS GOS HAS TAKEN NUMBER OF STEPS TO DEFEND ITS POSITION WITH RESPECT TO SPANISH SAHARA. THESE INCLUDE PUBLICIZING MILITARY PREPAREDENESS UNDERSCORED BY VISIT TO SAHARA BY MINISTER OF ARMY AND SUBSEQUENT PRESS INTERVIEW. HEAD OF SPECIAL OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR SAHARA IN PRESIDENT'S OFFICE HAS ALSO GIVEN PUBLIC INTERVIEW WHICH, TOGETHER WITH MINISTER'S STATEMENT, INDICATE GOS DETERMINATION TO DEFEND SAHARA MILITARILY IF NECESSARY. GOS HAS ALSO REITERATED TO UN SECGEN THAT SPAIN WILL CARRY OUT ITS PLEDGE
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TO IMPLEMENT UNGA RESOLUTION WITH RESPECT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

OF AREA BASED ON REFERENDUM TO BE HELD WITHIN FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1975. GOS HAS STATED THAT A CENSUS IS ABOUT TO BE COMPLETED IN SAHARA SO AS TO PROVIDE BASIS FOR VOTING. IN APPARENT EFFORT TO MAINTAIN CONCILIATORY ATTITUDE TOWARDS MOROCCO, GOS HAS GIVEN SPECIAL ATTENTION TO NEW MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR WHO HAS ALREADY BEEN RECEIVED BY FRANCO AT HIS PRIVATE PALACE. AT SAME TIME GOS REMOVED SEPT. 14 RESTRICTIONS AGAINST PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF SAHARA ISSUE.

NEWSPAPERS

BEGAN PUBLISHING EXTENSIVE ACCOUNTS SEPT 17 OF RECENT VISITS BY CORRESPONDENTS TO SAHARA WITH COMMENTS ABOUT SPANISH STAKE IN AREA, PARTICULARLY IN PHOSPHATE PRODUCTION. EDITORIALS HAVE UNIFORMLY EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR GOS POSITION AND CIRITICIZED MOROCCO FOR EXACERBATING SITUATION WHICH, THROUGH UN RESOLUTION, WAS HEADED TOWARD SOLUTION. SOME COMMENTARIES ALLUDE TO NEED FOR MORE GENERAL SETTLEMENT WITH MOROCCO INCLUDING OTHER OUTSTANDING ISSUES SUCH AS FISHERIES PROBLEM AND COMPENSATION TO EXPROPRIATED SPANISH PROPERTY HOLDERS IN MOROCCO. END SUMMARY.

2. LOCAL PRESS REPORTED SEPT. 5-8. COLOMA REPORTEDLY VISITED TROOP UNITS AND TOLD THEM OF SPANISH ARMY'S "HIGH DEGREE OF PREPAREDNESS" AND DEFINED ARMY'S MISSION AS OBLIGATION TO GUARANTEE "FREE EXPRESSION OF OPINIONS OF SAHARANS" IN CARRYING OUT UNGA RESOLUTION. MILITARY GOVERNORS RESPONSIBLE FOR SPANISH ENCLAVES OF CEUTA AND MELILLA VISITED THESE AREAS IN AUG.

3. THE BARCELONA NEWSPAPER "LA VANGUARDIA" CARRIED AN INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL COLOMA SEPT 9. HE SAID THAT ARMY'S MISSION WAS TO "DEFEND SPANISH INTERESTS IN SAHARA AND THAT ARMY WAS IN POSITION TO REPULSE ANY POSSIBLE MOROCCAN MILITARY AGGRESSION". COLOMA ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT HE SAW NO REASON TO BELIEVE SUCH AN AGGRESSION WAS LIKELY. COLOMA ALSO REFERRED TO THE MEMORANDUM RELEASED SEPT 7 BY MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WITH RESPECT TO REFERENDUM TO BE HELD IN FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1975 (REFTEL). ACCORDING TO MADRID DAILY "YA" SEPT 17, GOVERNOR GENERAL OF SAHARA TOLD CORRESPONDENT THAT TROOPS HAD BEEN "DEPLOYED" IN SAHARA AND WERE IN HIGH STATE OF READINESS. SAME ARTICLE ALSO REPORTED THAT SOME SPANISH WOMEN, OF A TOTAL SPANISH CIVILIAN POPULATION OF APPROXIMATELY 10,000 IN SAHARA, HAD LEFT BECAUSE OF FEAR OF TROUBLE.

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4. SPANISH TV BROADCAST CARRIED INTERVIEW SEPT 12 WITH DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR PROMOTION OF SAHARA IN PRESIDENT'S EXECUTIVE OFFICE, BLANCO, WHO SAID THAT SPAIN WAS FAITHFULLY FOLLOWING POLICY PRESCRIBED

IN UN RESOLUTION 3162 OF DEC 14, 1973. HE REFERRED TO MOROCCO'S "LARGE SCALE DIPLOMATIC AND PRESS OFFENSIVE AIMED AT CREATING A PSYCHOLOGICAL ATMOSPHERE" FAVORABLE TO ANNEXATION OF SAHARA. BLANCO DENIED THAT MOROCCO HAD ANY LEGITIMATE CLAIM TO AREA, CITING

SPAIN'S EARLY OCCUPANCY OF AREA WITH FOUNDING OF TRADING POSTS ALONG SAHARAN COAST. ASKED ABOUT CONDITIONS FOR EVENTUAL REFERENDUM, BLANCO SAID THAT JUDGING FROM STATEMENTS BY MOROCCAN LEADERS, IT SEEMED AS IF RABAT WOULD ONLY ACCEPT A REFERENDUM CARRIED OUT UNDER CONDITIONS WHICH WOULD NECESSARILY LEAD TO RESULT SOUGHT BY MOROCCO. QUESTIONED AS TO FUTURE OF SELF-GOVERNMENT IN SAHARA, BLANCO SAID THAT AREE WAS IN NO WORSE POSITION THAN OTHER PEOPLES WHO HAD GONE THROUGH SAME HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE AND NOTED THAT SHARANS WERE ALREADY TAKING PART IN SELF-GOVERNMENT THROUGH GENERAL ASSEMBLY SET UP IN 1967.

5. TURNING TO ISSUE OF AREA'S RESOURCES, BLANCO SAID THAT SAHARA WAS NOT ONLY RICH IN PHOSPHATES BUT ALSO HAD ABUNDANT FISH IN ITS COASTAL WATERS. IN HIS VIEW, INCORPORATION OF SAHARA INTO MOROCCO WOULD GIVE MOROCCO MONOPOLY OF PHOSPHATES, AND "ABSOLUTE DOMINATION OF WORLD MARKET OF THIS FERTILIZER." BLANCO SAID SPANIARDS ALONE HAD DEVELOPED SAHARA'S PHOSPHATES RESOURCES AND HAD PUT IN LARGE INVESTMENTS WHICH HAD NOT YET BEEN AMORTIZED. HE ALSO ALLUDED TO A DEVELOPMENT PLAN TO BE FINANCED WITH THE PROFITS MADE BY THE PHOSPHATE EXPLOITATION. BLANCO ALSO RE-AFFIRMED AN EARLIER STATEMENT THAT LIVING STANDARD OF SAHARANS COULD BE RAISED WITHIN FOUR YEARS TO SAME PER CAPITA LEVEL AS SPANISH PEOPLE BY MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN USING PROFITS FROM PHOSPHATE EXPLOITATION. ASKED ABOUT REPORTS OF CLASHES IN SAHARA BLANCO SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN SPORADIC "CONTACTS" BETWEEN SOME GROUPS APPARENTLY ORIGINATING IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. HE WENT ON TO STRESS THAT SPAIN WOULD NOT LEAVE THE SAHARAN PEOPLE UNPROTECTED. BLANCO ALSO REPORTED THAT A CENSUS WAS UNDERWAY IN THE SAHARA. (ACCORDING TO SEPARATE PRESS REPORT OF SEPT 4 SAHARAN CENSUS WAS BEING CARRIED OUT FIRST IN THE URBAN AREAS OF EL AAIUN AND VILLA CISNEROS AND WOULD BE COMPLETED BEFORE RAMADAN, WHICH BEGINS SEPT 27.)

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INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-14 IO-14 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 001
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MADRID 5867

6. SPANISH AMBASSADOR TO UN PINIES DELIVERED SEPTEMBER 13 TO UN SECGEN WALDHEIM A NOTE REITERATING CONTENTS OF NOTE SENT TO SECGEN AUGUST 20 (MADRID 5269) AFFIRMING GOS' INTENTION TO HOLD REFERENDUM IN FIRST HALF OF 1975. ACCORDING TO PRESS COMMENTS, PINIES STATED THAT GOS WAS TAKING STEPS SO THAT ONLY THE INDIGENOUS INHABITANTS WOULD EXERCISE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION" IN SAHARA. GOS REPORTEDLY MADE MORE EXPLICIT ITS DETERMINATION TO GIVE "UNITED NATIONS ALL THE FACILITIES SO THAT ACT OF SELF-DETERMINATION COULD BE CARRIED OUT UNDER ITS AUSPICES AND GUARANTEES".

7. MOROCCO'S NEW AMBASSADOR TO SPAIN, ABDELLATIF FILALI, WHO WAS FOREIGN MINISTER IN 1971-72, ARRIVED IN MADRID SHORTLY FOLLOWING HIS APPOINTMENT SEPTEMBER 5 AND WAS RECEIVED PROMPTLY BY FRANCO SEPTEMBER 11. LOCAL MEDIA HAVE GIVEN EXTENSIVE COVERAGE
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TO NEW AMBASSADOR'S ARRIVAL AND UNDERScoreD IMPORTANCE TO BE ATTACHED TO EARLY RECEPTION OF NEW AMBASSADOR BY FRANCO AT HIS PERSONAL PALACE. LOCAL OBSERVERS CONSIDER APPOINTMENT AND RECEPTION ACCORDED BY FRANCO, AND WELL-PUBLICIZED ATTENDANCE OF FOREIGN MINISTER AT MOROCCAN EMBASSY RECEPTION, AS INDICATIONS OF MADRID'S DESIRE TO POINT UP DESIRE FOR GOOD RELATIONS AND PEACEFUL SOLUTION.

8. GOS LIFTED RESTRICTION ON PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF SAHARAN ISSUE SEPTEMBER 14. (THIS WAS REVERSAL OF POSITION ADOPTED BY FRANCO IN AUGUST WHEN, THOUGH HE HAD STILL NOT RESUMED HIS POWERS AS CHIEF OF STATE, HE INTERVENED IN ONGOING TALKS WITH MOROCCANS TO REIMPOSE PRESS RESTRICTIONS ON PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF SAHARAN ISSUE AFTER MINISTRY OF INFORMATION HAD PREVIOUSLY LIFTED BAN ON SUCH REPORTING.) (MADRID 5269). MEDIA HAVE COMMENTED FAVORABLY ABOUT THIS DECISION.

9. SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED EXTENSIVE ACCOUNTS BY CORRESPONDENTS OF RECENT VISITS TO SAHARA IN SEPTEMBER 17 AND 18 EDITIONS. "YA", FOR EXAMPLE, PUBLISHED FIRST DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT IMPORTANCE OF PHOSPHATE DEPOSITS AND THEIR EXPLOITATION SINCE SPANIARDS FIRST BEGUN INVESTING MONEY IN PROJECT IN 1969. ARTICLE REPORTED THAT 750,000 TONS WERE EXPORTED IN 1973 AND THAT THROUGH AUGUST 12, 1974, 1,300,000 TONS HAD BEEN EXPORTED ALREADY AND TOTAL FOR YEAR WOULD APPROXIMATE 3,000,000 TONS. THESE PHOSPHATES WERE EXPORTED TO US, UK, AND JAPAN. OTHER ARTICLES POINT OUT THAT SAHARA HAS APPROXIMATELY 10,000 SPANISH CIVILIAN RESIDENTS ENGAGED IN BUSINESS AND THAT FISHING RESOURCES OF COAST WERE EXCEPTIONAL. ARTICLES GIVE IMPRESSION THAT SPAIN HAS IMPORTANT ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN AREA. PRESS COMMENTARIES REFER TO AGGRESSIVE STATEMENTS BY MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT AND EXISTENCE OF OTHER CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES WITH MOROCCO, NOTABLY FISHING DISPUTE, COMPENSATION TO SPANISH PROPERTY HOLDERS EXPROPRIATED BY MOROCCAN DECREES IN 1973 AND COMPLAINTS AGAINST MOROCCAN ASSISTANCE TO GIBRALTAR BY MEANS OF FOOD SUPPLIES, ETC. ARTICLE IN "ARRIBA" (USUALLY AUTHORITATIVE ORGAN OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT) DATED SEPTEMBER 17 NOTED THAT RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION WAS LIMITED TO INDIGENOUS POPULATION OF SAHARA AND NOT TO "POSSIBLE INTRUDERS". THIS STATEMENT FOLLOWED DISCUSSION OF NEED FOR INTERESTED PARTIES INCLUDING SPAIN, MOROCCO, MAURITANIA AS WELL AS SAHARAN PEOPLE TO AGREE ON CONDITIONS OF REFERENDUM.

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10. LOCAL PRESS REPORTED PROMINENTLY SEPTEMBER 18 DETAILS OF KING HASSAN'S PRESS CONFERENCE PREVIOUS DAY PROPOSING THAT SAHARAN ISSUE BE SUBMITTED TO INTERNATIONAL COURT AT THE HAGUE FOR JUDGMENT AS TO ORIGINAL TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY. REPORTS ALSO MENTIONED PRESS CONFERENCE HELD IN NEW YORK BY SPANISH AMBASSADOR TO UN, PINIES, WHO SAID THAT GOS POSITION ON SAHARA WAS "ABOVE APPROACH." PINIES ALSO REFERRED TO UNGA RESOLUTION'S PRESCRIPTION THAT UN COMMITTEE SHOULD SUPERVISE REFERENDUM IN SAHARA AND THAT GOS WOULD FACILITATE ITS WORK. HE CITED PRECEDENT FOLLOWED IN REFERENDUM HELD SEVERAL YEARS AGO IN FORMER SPANISH COLONY OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA.

11. COMMENT: GOS HAS CLEARLY TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF REMOVAL OF SAHARA NEWS BAN TO ENCOURAGE MEDIA TO REPLY FULLY TO MOROCCO'S "ANNEXATIONIST" CAMPAIGN AND TO PRESENT ITS CASE TO SPANISH AND INTERNATIONAL OPINION AS UNGA OPENS. LATEST SPANISH SIGNAL, THEREFORE, APPARENTLY DESIGNED TO CONVINCE MOROCCO OF SPANISH FIRMNESS ON REFERENDUM PLANS AND TO WRAP SPAIN IN PROTECTIVE MANTLE OF LEGALITY BY SCRUPULOUS ADHERENCE TO UN RESOLUTIONS. GOS ALSO AWARE THAT LIFTING OF PRESS BAN WOULD RESULT IN CRITICAL SPANISH PRESS COMMENTARY THAT COULD AGGRAVATE DISPUTE (AS IT DID DURING HEIGHT OF FISHING CONFLICT IN 1973), BUT APPARENTLY SAW GREATER RISK IN CONTINUING TO MUZZLE SPANISH PRESS WHILE SAHARA

ISSUE WOULD BE AIRED WORLDWIDE DURING UNGA MEETING. GOS SENTIMENT, AS SUGGESTED IN GOVERNMENT-STIMULATED PRESS COVERAGE, IT THAT SPAIN PROBABLY WOULD DEMONSTRATE MORE FLEXIBILITY ON SAHARAN ISSUE IF MOROCCO ITSELF WERE READY TO DEMONSTRATE SIMILAR FLEXIBILITY ON OTHER ISSUES AFFECTING BILATERAL RELATIONS. SPAIN HAS NOTED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT MOROCCO SETTLED OUTSTANDING CLAIMS OF FRENCH RESIDENTS AGAINST MOROCCO FOR EXPROPRIATION OF PROPERTIES AND OTHER INTERESTS BY MOROCCAN DECREE IN 1973 WHILE NOT SETTling SPANISH CLAIMS. GOS UNDOUBTEDLY FEELS THAT MOROCCO HAS AS YET NOT FOLLOWED UP AGREEMENT REACHED IN EARLY JANUARY 1974 FOR RESOLUTION OF FISHING DISPUTE INVOLVING FISHING PRIVILEGES FOR SPANIARDS IN WATERS CLAIMED BY MOROCCO.

12. REMOVAL OF BAN ON PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF SAHARA OPENS UP POSSIBILITY THAT SPANIARDS WILL BE ALERTED TO ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF AREA HERETOFORE CONSIDERED AS RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT IN ECONOMIC TERMS. GOS APPARENTLY INTENDS TO HAVE SPANIARDS AND CONFIDENTIAL

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OTHERS ALERTED TO ITS EXPECTATION TO OBTAIN COMPENSATION FOR LARGE INVESTMENT IN SAHARAN PHOSPHATES, IF GOS IS TO RELINQUISH AREA.

13. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY SOURCES, GOS INCREASINGLY CONVINCED THAT MOROCCAN DIPLOMATIC CAMPAIGN HAS NOT GAINED FULL SUPPORT AMONG ARAB COUNTRIES AND OTHER KEY POWERS SUCH AS USSR. INITIAL REACTION AMONG GOS SOURCES TO HASSAN'S PRESS CONFERENCE IS THAT KING USING ICJ PROPOSAL AS MEANS OF DISENGAGING GRACEFULLY FROM EMOTION-LADEN BUT LARGELY FRUITLESS CAMPAIGN.
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